(d) With a view to reduce delays in collection of outstation cheques, Reserve Bank of India have advised all public sector banks to use inter-city computerised clearing and courier services for speedy transmission of cheques. Besides, banks have been directed to offer immediate credit for outstation cheques upto Rs. 5,000/- to individual account holders and to pay interest @2 per cent p.a. over the savings bank interest rate for delayed collection of cheques beyond 10/14 days.

Hike in Prices of Consumer Goods

*337. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been reported in the press that the consumers will have to pay 20 per cent more on consumer items;

(b) if so, whether Government have examined these press reports;

(c) whether these prices have increased due to the levy of excise duty on a number of consumer goods manufactured by Small Scale Sector;

(d) if so, to what extent the price-rise has been noticed during March-April so far; and

(e) what steps are being taken by Government to check the hike in prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY) : (a) and (b) In the absence of any specific details, it is difficult to confirm or examine such reports.

(c) to (e) Prices of any commodity are governed by market forces and excise duty is only one of the factors. Moreover, small scale units with a turnover upto Rs. 2 crores have generally not been affected by the Budget proposals as they will not be required to pay duty on clearances upto Rs. 30 lakhs. For further clearances upto an aggregate value of Rs. 75 lakhs, the SSI units are required to pay duty at concessional rates. It is only when clearances exceed Rs. 75 lakhs that they are required to pay normal duty. Thus the exemptions withdrawn in the budget will not affect tiny and genuinely small scale units.

Loss of Foreign Exchange through Foreign Airlines

*338. SHRI MOHAMMED AFZAL alias MEEM AFZAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) how much foreign exchange went out of the country through the foreign airlines during the period 1993-94 airline-wise; and

(b) how much foreign exchange was earned by Air India and Indian Airlines during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Powerloom Units in the Country

*339. SHRI PRAGADA KOTAIAH : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of powerloom units in the country and the number of workers working therein, both in weaving and preparatory process;

(b) the number of powerlooms units with more than 10 powerlooms under one roof, employing more than 10 workers both in weaving and preparatory process of winding, warping, pirning etc.;

(c) whether powerloom units with more han 10 looms under one roof are governd by factory and labour laws;

(d) whether facilities like hygenic conditions, job security, standard wages, PF and gratuity, Medical care under ESI are provided to the workers in the powerloom units with more than 10 looms;

(e) whether the workers on powerlooms in units with more than 10 looms are treated at par with workers in powerlooms in textile mills relating to facilities and concessions; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) There are about 12.39 laks powerlooms in the country employing about 61.9 lakh workers.

(b) Powerlooms are in the decentralised sector and hence unitwise information is not maintained by the Government of India.

(c) to (f) According to the ID&R Act (1951), "FACTORY" means any premises, including the precincts thereof, in which a manufacturing process is being carried on or is ordinarily so carried on (i) with the aid of power, provided that 50 or more workers are working or were working thereon on any day of the preceding 12 months, or (ii) without the aid of power, provided that 100 or more workers are working or were working thereon on any day of the preceding 12 months and provided further that in no part of such premises any manufacturing process is being carried on with the aid of power.

Only the powerloom units which are covered by this definition will be governed by the Factories Act and other Labour Laws.

Since most of the powerlooms are in the decentralised sector, State Governments will be the appropriate authorities concerned for matters relating to provision of facilities such as job security, hygienic working conditions, medical and educational facilities etc.

Profits/losses of nationalised banks

*340. SHRI TRILOKINATH CHATURVEDI :

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have made a comparative study of the performance of State Bank of India, other nationalised banks and 22 prominent foreign banks, in terms of growth rate and net profit, if so, what are the findings for the year 1991-92 and 1993-94;

(b) what are the names of nationalised banks which have shown loss for two consecutive years, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by Government to remedy the situation;

(c) the profits repatriated by each of the foreign banks in 1991-92 and 1992-93; and

(d) what is the loss incurred by each of the nationalised banks and the State Bank of India in 1991-92 and 1992-93 ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASEKHAR MURTHY) : (a) No specific study of the comparative performance of the public sector banks vis-a-vis foreign banks has been undertaken by Government. However, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monitor the performance of different categories of banks operating in the country on a continuous basis. As reported by the RBI foreign banks recorded a growth rate of 51% in terms of deposits as against a growth rate of 15% recorded by public sector banks during the year ended 31-3-1992. The net profits of all foreign banks operating in India worked out to Rs. 320.80 crores as against a net profit of Rs. 559.05 crores recorded by the public sector banks during the same period.

Similar data relating to March, 1994 is not available since the accounts for the current financial year have not been finalised.

(b) Two nationalised banks namely, UCO Bank and New Bank of India suffered losess consecutively during 1991-92 and 1992-93. The losses were due to the high level of non-performing assets which do not earn income for the banks.

The New Bank of India has since been merged with Punjab National Bank. As regards UCO Bank, steps have been initiated to restructure the bank.

(c) The details of profits repatriated by foreign banks for 1991-92 and 1992-93 are given in the enclosed Statement I (*See* below).

(d) The details of the losses suffered by each of the nationalised banks during 1991-92 and 1992-93 are given in the enclosed Statement II. No bank from the State Bank group incurred any loss during this period.